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Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations: cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference

Letter dated 8 July 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward the Astana Declaration on "Peace, Cooperation and Development", adopted by the thirty-eighth session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Astana from 28 to 30 June 2011 (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly under agenda item 122 (s).

(Signed) Byrganym Aitimova
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 8 July 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Organization of Islamic Cooperation Astana Declaration

Peace, cooperation and development

Adopted by the thirty-eighth session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Astana from 28 to 30 June 2011

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of the member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), participating in the thirty-eighth session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Astana at a time of dynamic change, which holds challenges as well as opportunities for the Muslim Ummah and all humankind, and being aware of the added significance of this Council meeting, declare the following:

1. We reaffirm our dedication of the high principles of our faith, which enshrine the values of peace, compassion, tolerance, equality, justice and human dignity for the Ummah and all humankind and we resolve to promote peace, cooperation and development all over the world.
2. We are determined to give a new impetus to OIC and to strengthen its role as a means of promoting cooperation among our countries and implementing the new vision and goals for the Muslim world that require its reform, good governance and human rights in a way that meets the hopes and aspirations of the Ummah in the twenty-first century. It is within this context that we heartily welcome the transformation of our organization to a more cohesive and effective body under the new name of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation with a new logo.
3. We stress the importance of a successful implementation of the OIC 10-Year Programme of Action, both for the benefit of the Ummah and in contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. We recall the recommendations made at the midterm review meeting on the implementation of the OIC 10-Year Programme of Action and the OIC Vision 1441 H for Science and Technology, held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 4 to 6 December 2010, and we therefore emphasize the need for further improvement of the mechanism of action related to its implementation.
4. We recognize the emerging challenges to our community posed by the unfolding significant developments in the Middle East and North Africa. We appeal to all those concerned to engage in constructive dialogue and work towards peaceful solutions, assuring the protection of civilians. In the spirit of the OIC Charter, we will work, inter alia, through OIC, in order to turn these challenges into an opportunity to improve the lives of our peoples by promoting peace, cooperation, rule of law, human rights, fundamental freedoms, good governance, democracy and accountability.
5. We reiterate the need for an early settlement of the Palestinian issue and express full support to the Arab Peace Initiative aimed at reaching a lasting, comprehensive and just resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. We applaud the significant institution-building efforts accomplished by the Palestinian National

Authority, and call on the international community to acknowledge the progress achieved and to recognize the independent, sovereign state of Palestine based on the borders of 4 June 1967.

6. We strongly condemn Israel's settlement building and expansion, which constitute a flagrant violation of international law, which is an obstacle to restarting negotiations leading to an end to the occupation of the Palestinian territory by Israel since 1967. We call for the implementation of all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions pertaining to the Arab-Israeli conflict, in particular resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 425 (1978), 1515 (2003) and 1860 (2009). We also condemn illegal Israeli policies and actions aimed at altering the Arab and Islamic character of occupied East Jerusalem, changing its demographic composition and isolating it from its Palestinian surroundings. We reaffirm our support to the efforts made by His Majesty King Mohamed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, as well as the efforts of His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al-Hussein of Jordan in this regard.

7. We condemn Israel's persisting occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights and Lebanese territories, and we emphasize our support for these two countries in regaining all their territories occupied by Israel.

8. We underline the importance of security, sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and legal rights for all OIC member countries and a peaceful resolution of the conflicts in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the OIC Charter and international law. We express solidarity with Iraq, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Somalia, the Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, the Union of the Comoros, Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the peoples of the Turkish Cypriot State, Kosovo and Jammu and Kashmir in their aspirations to a peaceful, secure and prosperous life. We support efforts to strengthen and enhance the role of OIC in conflict prevention and resolution.

9. We are deeply concerned about the situation in Libya and its humanitarian consequences and call upon the member States and institutions of OIC to take part in the ongoing efforts aimed at providing humanitarian assistance to the people of Libya. We request the Secretary General of OIC follow the situation in this brotherly country and provide member States with regular and timely reports on all developments. We also welcome all efforts aiming at achieving a peaceful solution to this crisis.

10. We reaffirm our joint commitment to a long-term engagement in Afghanistan in order to bring peace, stability and socio-economic development to this country and to tackle new challenges emerging from it. In this regard we welcome the initiatives aimed at contributing to the enhancement of cooperation with Afghanistan and commend relevant educational programmes, technical assistance and infrastructural projects. We resolve to step up our efforts to prevent and control drugs and crime. We further welcome the support of the United Nations in mobilizing and coordinating international efforts to counter the threat posed by illicit drugs in the region. We commend in this regard the activities of the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre for Combating the Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and their Precursors (CARICC) in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

11. We strongly condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and reaffirm that terrorism should never be linked to any religion, race, faith, values,

culture or society. We express our deepest sympathy and support for all who have fallen victim to such vicious attacks. We note that terrorism cannot be effectively addressed purely from a security perspective or by military means. Combating terrorism must be dealt with through providing proper education and better social conditions for impoverished people and job opportunities for youth, and would yield far better results by the eradication of its root causes. We reiterate our commitment to strengthening cooperation in fighting and eliminating terrorism and we reaffirm the proposal of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz, on the establishment of an international centre for combating terrorism under the umbrella of the United Nations. We welcome the initiative of Iran in organizing the International Conference on the Global Fight against Terrorism in Tehran in June 2011.

12. Greater efforts are needed to promote non-proliferation and disarmament. We further stress the fact that progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, in all its aspects, is essential to strengthen international peace and security. We highlight the support of OIC towards nuclear disarmament and the elimination of other weapons of mass destruction and reiterate our call for non-proliferation through political and diplomatic means within the framework of international law, relevant multilateral conventions and the Charter of the United Nations. We applaud the call made at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to convene a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. We commend the ongoing implementation of the Treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

13. We congratulate the Republic of Kazakhstan on its achievement of closing the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site and celebrate the twentieth anniversary of this landmark event. We welcome the United Nations resolution on the initiative of Kazakhstan to declare 29 August as International Day against Nuclear Tests.

14. We commend the efforts exerted by the member States and Secretary General of OIC in supporting the causes of the Muslim communities in non-OIC member States, and urge them to continue to support these efforts consistent with the implementation of the relevant OIC Summit and Council of Foreign Ministers resolutions within the established principle of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States to which they belong, in accordance with international law and international agreements in general.

15. We reaffirm the importance of increased efforts to promote interreligious, inter-ethnic and intercultural dialogue within and between States in order to protect the rights of every individual, prevent conflict, foster social harmony, preserve identity and celebrate diversity. We welcome the initiative of the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, to convene the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions on a regular basis and support other important initiatives and forums of the Islamic countries that provide an effective platform for dialogue to promote inter-faith peace and harmony, including King Abdullah's Centre for Dialogue between Cultures and Civilizations and the Alliance of Civilizations co-sponsored by Turkey. We acknowledge the example set by the Republic of Kazakhstan in terms of strengthening dialogue between Governments and citizens of

countries in those parts of the world that are known as the Muslim world and the West.

16. We call for tolerance and condemn Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslims. We commend the continued initiatives by the OIC Secretary General to effectively counter Islamophobia in various international forums. We call upon the international community to take effective measures to combat the defamation of religions and stereotyping of people on the basis of religion, faith or race.

17. We recognize the growing importance of the Central Asian region for the Ummah, evident by the fact that the Republic of Kazakhstan is the second consecutive Central Asian State, after the Republic of Tajikistan, to chair the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers. We support efforts to promote regional cooperation in Central Asia and applaud the various programmes aimed at involving regional groups in the ongoing socio-economic activities, including the adoption of the Plan of Action for Cooperation with Central Asia.

18. We acknowledge the key role that socio-economic development plays for the stability of our societies. We therefore welcome the outcome of the 7th World Islamic Economic Forum, held in Astana from 7 to 9 June 2011. We pledge to strengthen development, reduce vulnerability and to unleash the potential of our peoples and economies. We confirm our determination to enhance trade and aid among Muslim countries, and to promote education and innovation in order to modernize our societies, cope with demographic changes and create new opportunities, especially for youth and women. We recognize the immense opportunities for economic cooperation presented by the abundant human and natural resources of the Muslim world. In this respect, we call for the strengthening of multilateral cooperation within OIC in trade, economic, scientific, technical and environmental dimensions, as well as for the establishment of a fund for small and medium-sized enterprises, under the auspices of the Islamic Development Bank.

19. We stress the importance of sufficient health care for the prosperous development of our societies. We commend the plans for adopting a "Strategic Plan of Action for the OIC in the Sphere of Health Care until 2020" at the 3rd Conference of OIC Health Ministers, to be hosted by the Republic of Kazakhstan later this year.

20. We are concerned with the fact that insufficient access to food and water can affect the well-being of our peoples and the stability of our States. We call for increased cooperation in the area of food security, among OIC States and between OIC and interested partners. We therefore welcome the establishment of a relevant food security mechanism. We cherish water as a blessing from God that gives and sustains life. We therefore call for greater cooperation to promote water management, including through the realization of the OIC Water Vision.

21. We recognize the role of the private sector in building capacity, generating investment and promoting the overall growth of the economies of the OIC member States. To this effect, we call for increased support for activities of private sector establishments in the OIC member States, including encouragement of their participation in trade promotion and joint venture activities.

22. We reiterate the importance of the preservation and restoration of our cultural heritage and the exchange of best practices in learning and teaching languages, history and culture of the Islamic countries. We welcome the nomination

of Almaty as the capital of Islamic culture in Asia 2015 by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

23. We support the mobilization of additional resources and invite OIC member States to scale up their relevant contributions. In this regard, we call upon all national and international development partners to collaborate with OIC in its efforts to expand South-South cooperation.

24. We call for greater inter-institutional cooperation between OIC, the United Nations, the African Union, the League of Arab States, the European Union, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States and other relevant organizations.

25. We express profound gratitude to the Secretary General, Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, for effectively promoting the cause of the Muslim world, for disseminating our values and for raising the profile of OIC as a significant player and important actor on the global scene. We support efforts to strengthen the operational capacity of OIC, and to increase cooperation with other relevant partners, including by expanding the organization's network of liaison offices.

26. We express our deep appreciation to Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and the people and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan for their generosity, hospitality and efforts that led to the success of the thirty-eighth session of the Council of Foreign Ministers.

Done in Astana on 30 June 2011